

20 March 2026

Our Ref Cabinet Panel on the Environment 1 April  
2026  
Contact. Committee Services  
Direct Dial. (01462) 474655  
Email. [committee.services@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@north-herts.gov.uk)

To: Members of the Committee: Councillors Amy Allen (Chair), Emma Fernandes, Joe Graziano, Dominic Griffiths, Caroline McDonnell, Lisa Nash and Claire Strong

Substitutes: Councillors Sam Collins, Mick Debenham, Paul Ward, Claire Winchester, Donna Wright and Daniel Wright-Mason

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A**

**MEETING OF THE CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

to be held

**VIA ZOOM**

On

**WEDNESDAY, 1ST APRIL, 2026 AT 7.30 PM**

Yours sincerely,

Isabelle Alajooz  
Director – Governance

**\*\*MEMBERS PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU DOWNLOAD ALL AGENDAS AND REPORTS VIA THE MOD.GOV APPLICATION ON YOUR TABLET BEFORE ATTENDING THE MEETING\*\***

## **Agenda** **Part I**

<b>Item</b>		<b>Page</b>
<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	Members are required to notify any substitutions by midday on the day of the meeting.  Late substitutions will not be accepted and Members attending as a substitute without having given the due notice will not be able to take part in the meeting.	
<b>2. MINUTES - 11 FEBRUARY 2026</b>	To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 11 February 2026.	(Pages 5 - 12)
<b>3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>		
	<b><u>Climate Emergency</u></b>  The Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to achieving a target of zero carbon emissions by 2030 and helping local people and businesses to reduce their own carbon emissions.  A Cabinet Panel on the Environment has been established to engage with local people on matters relating to the climate emergency and advise the council on how to achieve these climate change objectives.  A Climate Change Implementation group of councillors and council officers meets regularly to produce plans and monitor progress. Actions taken or currently underway include switching to green energy, incentives for low emission taxis, expanding tree planting and working to cut food waste.  In addition the council is a member of the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership, working with other councils across Hertfordshire to reduce the county's carbon emissions and climate impact. The Council's dedicated webpage on Climate Change includes details of the council's climate change strategy, the work of the Cabinet Panel on the Environment and a monthly briefing on progress.	
	<b><u>Ecological Emergency</u></b>  The Council has declared an ecological emergency and is committed to addressing the ecological emergency and nature recovery by identifying appropriate areas for habitat restoration and biodiversity net gain whilst ensuring that development limits impact on existing habitats in its process.	

The Council has set out to do that by a) setting measurable targets and standards for biodiversity increase, in both species and quantities, seeking to increase community engagement, b) to work with our partners to establish a Local Nature Partnership for Hertfordshire and to develop Nature Recovery Networks and Nature Recovery Strategy for Hertfordshire and c) to investigate new approaches to nature recovery such as habitat banking that deliver biodiversity objectives and provide new investment opportunities.

#### Declaration of Interest

Members are reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and are required to notify the Chair of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest, wishing to exercise a 'Councillor Speaking Right', must declare this at the same time as the interest, move to the public area before speaking to the item and then must leave the room before the debate and vote.

#### **4. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

Members should notify the Chair of other business which they wish to be discussed at the end of either Part I or Part II business set out in the agenda. They must state the circumstances which they consider justify the business being considered as a matter of urgency.

The Chair will decide whether any item(s) raised will be considered.

#### **5. INFORMATION NOTE: COUNCIL ACTIVITY UPDATE AND ACTION TRACKER** INFORMATION NOTE OF THE POLICY & STRATEGY TEAM LEADER

(Pages  
13 - 22)

This note highlights the topic for this Panel meeting as well as a Council Activity Update, and Action Tracker Review (at Appendix A) for the Cabinet Panel on the Environment.

#### **6. PRESENTATIONS**

To receive presentations from the following organisations:

- 1) North Herts Council Waste Team and Veolia – New Waste Service Provision
- 2) Timberpak Pearce – Mixed Recycling Facilities
- 3) Biogen – Food Waste Recycling

#### **7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

To receive petitions, comments and questions from the public.

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# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

## NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT

MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM  
ON WEDNESDAY, 11TH FEBRUARY, 2026 AT 7.30 PM

#### MINUTES

**Present:** *Councillors: Amy Allen (Chair), Emma Fernandes, Joe Graziano, Caroline McDonnell and Claire Strong.*

**In Attendance:** *Georgina Chapman (Policy & Strategy Team Leader), Robert Filby (Trainee Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Daisy Harris (Business Admin Apprentice - Policy), Ellie Hollingsworth (Policy & Strategy Officer), James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager) and Amber Smith-Howell (National Graduate - Management Trainee).*

**Also Present:** *At the commencement of the meeting, approximately 10 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

#### 17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

*Audio recording – 3 minutes 46 seconds*

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dominic Griffiths and Lisa Nash.

#### 18 MINUTES - 14 JANUARY 2026

*Audio Recording – 4 minutes 3 seconds*

Councillor Amy Allen, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Claire Strong seconded and, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 14 January 2026 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

#### 19 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Audio recording – 4 minutes 29 seconds*

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be recorded.
- (2) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.
- (3) The Chair reminded Members that the Council had declared both a Climate Emergency and an Ecological Emergency. These are serious decisions, and mean that, as this was an emergency, all of us, Officers and Members had that in mind as we carried out our various roles and tasks for the benefit of our District.
- (4) The Chair informed those present that the theme for this Panel meeting was 'Sustainability in Schools', and that speakers from schools around Hertfordshire were in attendance to present on this topic at Agenda Item 6.

- (5) The Chair highlighted the final agenda item which was to consider suggestions of items for future meetings, and asked Members and members of the public to consider any items that they may wish to suggest ahead of this item.

**20 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

*Audio recording – 5 minutes 32 seconds*

There was no other business notified.

**21 INFORMATION NOTE: COUNCIL ACTIVITY UPDATE AND ACTION TRACKER**

*Audio recording – 7 minutes 2 seconds*

Officers from the Policy and Strategy Team provided a verbal update on the Information Note entitled 'Council Activity Update and Action Tracker' and advised that:

- The third round of Solar Together had closed, but more installations continued to be completed with 73 done so far, totalling over 700 panels.
- Hertfordshire County Council were expanding their Flood Kit Pilot Scheme by inviting more communities that had experienced flooding or were susceptible to register their interest.
- Flood kits comprised equipment tailored to meet the risk profiles of each community, and they were designed to be kept in an accessible, central storage unit on public land.
- All actions on the Action Tracker had been completed but any actions arising from this meeting would be added to the tracker in consultation with the Chair.
- The Council were working with Hertfordshire County Council to deliver the priorities and actions within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy which had been published and launched in January at a nature summit event.
- The project to decarbonise leisure centres was progressing, and design work for the decarbonisation of other Council facilities such as North Herts Museum had also progressed as part of phase two of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.
- The Council engagement hub for climate change and sustainability, known as the Climate Hive, now had 985 subscribers and continued to keep subscribers updated on the latest consultations, eco events, Council activities and more.
- Over £63,000 had been awarded from the Sustainable Communities Grant to six local organisations to carry out sustainability projects last year.
- Updates on those projects would be provided soon, except the project at Royston Museum as they had already installed a heat pump system, which they were feeling the benefit of.
- Monthly sustainability briefings which included information on funding, upcoming events and Council activity were available to view on the Council website.
- Actions in the Sustainability Strategy continued to be monitored on a quarterly basis by the Climate and Sustainability Officer Group and Political Liaison Board.
- Decarbonisation works to leisure centres across the district were targeted to be finished by the summer.
- Hydrogenated vegetable oil was in use in all refuse vehicles, and new electric vehicles had arrived and were in use for street cleansing purposes.
- A sustainability e-learning module covering sustainability aims and how Council staff could contribute to these had been launched internally.
- New EV charge points had gone live across Council car parks.
- Work on the Warm Homes Local Grant continued to progress, and the scheme had been advertised in the Winter Outlook Magazine.
- The new Council App had almost 16,000 downloads and continued to contribute towards improving recycling rates.

- A process to record and monitor the impacts of extreme weather events on services had been implemented across the Council.
- More updates on Council activity would be issued at the next Panel meeting.
- If Members or members of the public wished to contact the Cabinet Panel outside of meetings, they could do this through the dedicated email address which had been provided.

In response to questions from Councillor Claire Strong, Officers from the Policy and Strategy Team advised that:

- Two flood kits had been provided to communities in Kimpton and Hitchin, who were at different stages of the pilot scheme.
- An extreme weather event was assessed through warnings and alerts issued by the Met Office.

## 22 PRESENTATIONS

*Audio recording – 18 minutes 57 seconds*

The Chair informed those present that the education sector was responsible for 36% of public sector building emissions and that there were many opportunities for carbon to be cut in this sector, as well as embed sustainability into schools. The Chair also advised that there were several initiatives available for schools such as Eco-Schools, Lets Go Zero and Solar Schools, and links to these would be provided.

The Chair invited Nick Dean to give a presentation, supported by slides and images, on biodiversity improvement projects at Icknield Infant and Nursery School. They thanked the Chair for the opportunity to present and advised that:

- They were the Caretaker and Site Manager at the school.
- All vegetation on their school grounds had been manicured up until 2021.
- They decided to change this after a study revealed little to no vegetation or wildlife on the extensive greenspace within the school.
- Bee Orchid Rosette locations started to be identified and marked in 2022, and 45 of these reached the flowering stage.
- No mow areas and a 500 square foot seasonal flower meadow were introduced to the school grounds in 2023, which resulted in the flowering of 125 Bee Orchids and 2 Pyramidal Orchids the following year.
- Three public tours of the site were conducted to showcase the work that had been undertaken on-site, and £50 was donated by visitors towards its upkeep.
- Only 20 Bee Orchids had flowered in 2025 due to a dry period before summer. However, approximately 150 Bee Orchid Rosettes had been spotted so far in 2026.
- One new fruit tree had been planted by each class in their orchard on Arbor Day, and year 2 pupils would be planting more trees at Standalone Farm.
- Volunteers helped to run gardening clubs, sow seeds and plant vegetation in their allotment area.
- A Fairyland Woodland would be introduced, which would include a log pile habitat to increase the minibeast population.
- Animals spotted on their site included Robins, Wagtails, Black Squirrels, Hedgehogs and Foxes, and insects such as Crickets, Butterflies, Beetles and Digger Wasps had been present too.
- An Eco Council had been formed at the school in 2026 to drive eco mentality at the school and get the children more involved with projects.
- After being awarded £5,000 from the Royal Horticultural Society Grant to convert a grey space to a green one, the preference to build a pond had been expressed after pupils on the Eco Council had consulted their classmates.

- A local company called Women With Waders would build the pond over half-term and supply 50% of the pond vegetation for free as they had a vested interest in the project. As a result, the cost of the pond would be fully covered by the grant.
- Birds and frogs would be attracted to the pond, and there would be space within the fencing around the pond for a beehive to further increase pollination and biodiversity on-site.

The following members of the public asked questions:

- Diane Ketcher
- Sue Lines
- Rhys Waterman

In response to questions, Nick Dean advised that:

- Hertfordshire County Council had case studied their work and would share this with other schools in the future.
- Visits to the pond would be more than welcome once it was complete.
- Pond vegetation would create a self-sustaining, specific ecosystem.
- The grant from the Royal Horticultural Society was non-competitive and could be secured if all the criteria were met.

Councillor Joe Graziano commended the great work that had been carried out at the school on sustainability and biodiversity.

Councillor Claire Strong advised that she could put them in contact with the Rotary Club who always looked for places to plant trees from their tree nursery once matured.

The Chair then invited James Hedley-Hamilton and Mark Miller to give a presentation, supported by slides and images, on the construction and design of Buntingford First School. They thanked the Chair for the opportunity and advised that:

- Buntingford First School was the first net zero carbon school in Hertfordshire and the first carbon neutral school in England.
- The school was in line with the Sustainability Strategy of the County Council and their aim to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- The County Council had worked with Morgan Sindall Construction, Holmes Miller Architects and Sussed Sustainability to build the school, with the aim of lowering carbon emissions and improving the learning environment.
- A target had been set to keep energy demand below 65 kilowatts per metres squared per annum, and embodied carbon below 620KG per metres squared on-site, and to offset this through renewable energy sources and planting schemes.
- Building materials for the school structure were natural to ensure better breathing air within the school.
- A 20% Biodiversity Net Gain had been achieved across the wider site.
- The building had been designed to limit heat loss, water consumption and replaceable items once operational.
- A Green Travel Plan had been introduced to reduce parking provision on-site and utilise spaces at The Bury to free up space in the carbon budget.
- Key targets had been grouped under three headings which were climate, wellbeing and resilience.
- Passive house methodology had been used to track the design and performance of the building through to its completion to ensure that targets had been met.
- Recycled aggregates had been used in the foundations and interior and timber cladding from a carbon neutral source had been used for the exterior.
- An Air Quality Monitoring Plan had been devised.

- The building had been attuned for learning by limiting the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration to 900 parts per million, regulating temperatures, and eliminating any toxins by using water-based products in the interior decorations.
- Satisfaction surveys had been conducted with pupils and staff to ensure that the environment was comfortable.
- Flexibility and expansion of the building in the future had been thought about during the design process.
- Weather files in 2050 and 2080 had been studied to ensure that the building could withstand both future rainfall volume and temperatures.
- Annual checks were carried out on the school to monitor its functionality, and the data so far showed that it had performed better than intended.
- Certification for Passive House accreditation on the school building had been applied for.
- Buntingford First School had provided a blueprint for future carbon neutral schools, and events had been held at the school to showcase it.

The following Members and members of the public asked questions:

- Councillor Emma Fernandes
- Glyn Holt

In response to questions, Mark Miller advised that:

- All classrooms were north facing with big windows to facilitate natural lighting without glare, and windows on the south side of the building were smaller to control heat fluxes.
- DALI Bias Lighting had been implemented so that lighting would switch off automatically when natural light was detected, which saved energy and ensured lighting balance.
- Positive feedback had been obtained from the evaluation work, with good pupil concentration and stable temperatures reported.
- Outreach had been done by the school to promote its qualities to other schools.

In response to questions, James Hedley-Hamilton advised that:

- The school had been delivered at a premium cost, however, savings had been made on the building interior as materials had been unaltered and finishes had been avoided.
- Learnings from the design and construction of this school would mean that more schools built like this would come at a reduced cost.
- New requirements would push new schools to meet the standards that had been by Buntingford First School.
- Operational expenditure over the lifetime of the building would be lower than standard as the capital expenditure had been higher than typical.

The Chair invited Rhys Waterman to give a presentation, supported by slides and images, on green initiatives at Hitchin Boys School. They thanked the Chair for the opportunity and advised that:

- They had been the Sustainability Lead at Hitchin Boys for 1.5 years.
- The school had achieved the Eco-Schools Green Flag of Distinction for their work on biodiversity.
- Elements of sustainability were visible across the school grounds and in school policies such as the School Development Plan.
- All lighting had been changed to LEDs which had reduced their energy demand.
- Solar panels had been installed on all new buildings on-site.
- A travel survey with students had revealed that expanding the bike shed would encourage more cycling to school.

- They had worked with Lets Go Zero to devise an Action Plan and conduct carbon counting, and other organisations such as Herts Wildlife Trust, Nature Park and Operation Future Hope to provide learning materials.
- There were three key areas of focus to their work which were increasing community engagement with sustainability, improving biodiversity and inclusion.
- Their Eco Committee met every week and had participation from all ages.
- 420 saplings had been planted on school grounds at community tree planting events that had taken place in each of the last two years.
- Daily emails were sent to both students and parents as part of Green Week to promote sustainable activities.
- Half of their autumn non-uniform day contributions had been donated to Just One Tree who planted trees globally, and the other 50% went to on-site sustainability projects.
- Twilight Sessions were run for staff to encourage them to embed sustainability into the school curriculum where appropriate.
- Various school trips on the themes of wildlife, biodiversity and sustainability had taken place, including visits to sustainability conferences.
- On-site biodiversity had been improved through habitat creation such as log piling, dead hedging, wild flowering, long grass creation, and the installation of bird boxes and feeding stations.
- They ran inclusion programmes with pupils to improve their engagement such as their Voyager Programme for Year 9 students, which focused on sustainability projects and mental health.
- A Horizons Pathway programme would be introduced for Year 10 and 11 students.
- They also offered qualifications linked to sustainability such as the Kings Trust PDE Level 2 and a BTEC in Land Based Studies to students.
- Sustainable food practices would be learned about in the summer, and a space to plant fruits and vegetables would be created for this.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Joe Graziano
- Councillor Claire Strong

In response to questions, Rhys Waterman advised that:

- The best way to make children appreciate nature was to get them to experience it and learn to take care of it.
- Students and volunteers conducted litter picking weekly.

Councillor Claire Strong advised that they should contact the Community Team at the Council to find out more on grant funding sources, in addition to Community Lottery who would help with vegetable and fruit planting.

## 23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

*Audio recording – 1 hour 51 minutes 30 seconds*

The Chair advised that there was no specific participation from members of the public at this meeting, but that public participants had been included as part of discussions on Agenda Items 5 and 6.

**24 SUGGESTED ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

*Audio recording – 1 hour 51 minutes 33 seconds*

The Chair led a discussion to consider items for future meetings of the Cabinet Panel with Members and members of the public present.

The following Members took part in the discussion:

- Councillor Emma Fernandes
- Councillor Joe Graziano

The following points were raised as part of the discussion:

- There had been a Government report in January on a national security assessment relating to biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse.
- Concern had been raised over food security and provision in the event of a breakdown.
- Grant schemes related to insulation and heating should be further signposted to those on low incomes as there were lots of people who were still unaware of them.

In response to points raised in the discussion, the Chair advised that any further suggested items for future meetings could be emailed to the Environment Panel Inbox after the meeting.

The Chair advised that suggested items would be considered, alongside Officers, for inclusion at future meetings of the Cabinet Panel.

The Chair thanked members of the public for their participation at the meeting and speakers for their presentations, in addition to Officers and Members.

The meeting closed at 9.28 pm

Chair

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**CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT**  
**1<sup>st</sup> April 2026**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: Council Activity Update and Action Tracker**

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR: Environment

PRIORITY: SUSTAINABILITY

**1. SUMMARY**

Panel Overview 2025/26

- 1.1 This note highlights the topic for this Panel meeting as well as a Council Activity Update, and Action Tracker Review (at Appendix A) for the Cabinet Panel on the Environment.
- 1.2 The Cabinet Panel aims to select topics which will enable open discussion that may lead to recommendations to Cabinet from the relevant Executive Members or Director, regarding actions that they believe the Council should be taking to address climate and environmental issues.

Panel Meeting: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026

- 1.3 This Panel meeting will include an update on the progress of the new waste service provision, with presentations from the Council and Veolia, our waste contractor. There will also be presentations from Timberpak Pearce about their mixed recycling facilities, and from Biogen, our food waste recycling service provider.

**2. STEPS TO DATE**

- 2.1 Cabinet approved the establishment of the Cabinet Panel for the Environment at the 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019 meeting. The amended terms of reference were tabled for the Full Council meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> June<sup>1</sup>. The Constitutional Amendment Report of the 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023<sup>2</sup> recommended that this Panel be the only remaining panel going forward.
- 2.2 By way of update to the Panel, we have been involved in the following work:

**3. COUNCIL ACTIVITY**

- 3.1 **Contributions to the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP)**
- 3.2 The third round of **Solar Together** has closed. Over 650 North Herts residents registered interest and 113 have accepted offers for Solar PV. North Herts also has one business accepted for battery storage. 73 solar installations have so far been completed in North Herts, totalling 773 panels. 69 batteries have also been installed. From the installations completed so far, it is estimated that 64,107kg of CO<sub>2</sub> will be saved per year.

<sup>1</sup> [Appendix B - Revised Terms of Reference for Cabinet Panel on the Environment.pdf \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Constitutional amendment report 18.4.23.docx \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)

- 3.2 Hertfordshire County Council are expanding on Hertfordshire's first **Flood Kit Pilot Scheme**. The scheme was set up to support communities to become more resilient and prepared for future flooding. Communities across Hertfordshire has been selected as areas that recently experienced flooding. Each flood kit has been tailored to meet the local risk profile and community needs including equipment such as hydrosacks, high-vis jackets, puddle pumps and much more to help in the event of flooding. The kits are to be placed in a storage unit on land with public liability insurance and suitable for local access, quickly and efficiently. Kimpton and Hitchin are already involved in the scheme for North Herts and Hertfordshire County Council is inviting other communities who have experienced flooding and would benefit from a shared kit and plan to register their interest. You can find our more on eligibility of your area and complete an application form on the County Council's website: [Flooding and water | Hertfordshire County Council](#)
- 3.3 Retrofit**
- 3.4 The council are working with HCCSP to support the delivery of the retrofit strategy - [Building Retrofit](#).
- 3.5 Your Tree Our Future scheme**
- 3.6 The 'Your Tree Our Future' initiative has been extremely popular in North Herts, with 14,739 free trees claimed and planted across the district this year. Thousands of residents took part by collecting free saplings to plant in gardens, community spaces, schools, and green areas. These trees will help create a greener, more sustainable Hertfordshire for future generations by boosting habitats, improving air quality, and strengthening climate resilience.
- 3.7 Local Nature Recovery Strategy**
- 3.8 Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are statutory spatial strategies which agree priorities for nature recovery and propose actions to achieve these priorities. The Strategy contains a local habitat map and a written statement of biodiversity priorities, as well as agreed actions. Public consultation was open throughout summer 2025. The Strategy has now been published. [Local Nature Recovery Strategy | Hertfordshire County Council](#) Residents can do their part in their own gardens by planting bee-friendly wildflowers, avoiding astroturf, or agreeing with your neighbour to build 'hedgehog fence holes'.
- 3.9 Two Hitchin streets given clean air clearance**
- 3.10 Stevenage Road and Payne's Park in Hitchin are no longer Air Quality Management Areas, after more than five years of air-quality levels remaining well below national limits. Local improvements and sustainability trends, including cleaner vehicle technology and the gradual shift towards low- and zero-emission transport have made this possible. The council will continue monitoring air quality with its 42 nitrogen-dioxide sampling points and particulate-matter stations in Hitchin.
- 3.11 Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS)**
- 3.12 The project to decarbonise our leisure facilities is progressing well with Royston scheduled to be finished by April and North Herts and Royston estimated to be finished by the summer. Design work for decarbonisation of Hitchin Town Hall and North Herts Museum, and the learner pool at North Herts Leisure Centre is progressing as part of the council's decarbonisation phase 2 project, with the aim to submit a planning application in the early part of the 26/27 financial year.

### **3.13 Council Emissions**

3.14 A report on North Herts Councils' greenhouse gas emissions has now been published on our website which covers progress in reducing the council's own emissions and summarises progress on district wide emissions. The report uses 2021-22 as the baseline year for the council's operational emissions and reports progress annually to 2024-25. Available at: [Reducing emissions | North Herts Council](#)

### **3.15 Climate Engagement**

3.16 The North Herts engagement hub for climate change and sustainability, the Climate Hive, now has 1080 subscribers. We continue to keep residents up to date on the latest surveys and consultations, eco events, national environment days, the Cabinet Panel for the Environment, and council activity.

### **3.17 Bee Part of it Event**

3.18 As part of the Bee Part of it project, our greenspace contractors, John O'Conner are holding a community bee event in Baldock on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2026 to expand the Bee Corridor in North Herts. The event will take place at Avenue Park in Baldock between 10am and 2pm. There will be a range of activities for those of all ages including a community seed bomb colour throw at 1pm to help create a wildflower haven for pollinators. More information on the Bee Corridor at: [Bee corridors | North Herts Council](#).

### **3.19 Community Energy Event – Film Screening**

3.20 The Council are partnering with the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation to host a community energy event at the Broadway Cinema in Letchworth. The event will include a showing of the film 'Power Station' followed by a Q&A session with the Co-Director of the film, on the 10<sup>th</sup> June. Tickets available: [Power Station: Q&A Co-Director Dan Edelstyn - Broadway Cinema & Theatre, Letchworth](#).

### **3.21 Sustainability Briefings**

3.22 The latest Sustainability briefings are available to view on the website at: [Latest updates on Sustainability | North Herts Council](#). They include information on available funding, upcoming events, and council activity.

## **4 SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2025-2030 UPDATES**

4.1 The Sustainability Strategy 2025-2030 is available here: [Sustainability strategy | North Herts Council](#). Actions are being monitored by our Climate and Sustainability Officer Group and Political Liaison Board which is comprised of Cabinet Members and our Leadership Team. Key progress made so far includes:

- Ongoing progress on-site at our leisure centres as part of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Project. Royston Leisure Centre is due to be completed in April, Letchworth in June and Hitchin in July.
- Hydro-treated Vegetable Oil (HVO) use in refuse vehicles has saved 368 tonnes of carbon (CO<sub>2</sub>e) between May and November 2025. Electric Vehicles are now in operation for the waste collection service for further reductions in carbon emissions.
- Our aim to train staff on climate change issues has progressed, with 81% of staff having completed the tailored Sustainability eLearning module. 11 officers became certified as [Carbon Literate](#) by attending 2-day training sessions facilitated by Hertfordshire County Council.

- We continue to deliver the government funded Warm Homes Local Grant scheme aimed at supporting homes in fuel poverty in North Herts with insulation, solar panels and clean heating. For year 1, we will deliver installations at 12 homes, with a further 10 surveyed for delivery in year 2.
- The North Herts Council app has gone live, with additional guidance on recycling which is part of the effort to improve recycling rates. The app currently has over 17,000 downloads.
- Process now in place to record and monitor the impacts of extreme weather events on our services.
- Wild areas including a wild meadow are now in place at Wilbury Hills Cemetery.
- The action on publishing the annual report of progress towards the council's emissions targets has been completed with the upload of the report to the website as stated above.
- An EV salary sacrifice scheme has been launched for staff at the council to help them invest in lower emission vehicles, supporting a reduction in staff commuting emissions.

## **5 INFORMATION TO NOTE**

- 5.1 Our Environment inbox is a means for members of the public or organisations to provide suggestions/presentations for the panel's consideration. The address is - EnvironmentPanel@north-herts.gov.uk
- 5.2 The Panel could choose to accept suggestions from outside the meeting including:
- Suggestions by Members of the public or organisations either at the meeting or by email.
  - Recommendations from Council, Cabinet or any other Committee.
  - Suggestions by any Member of the Council.
  - Suggestions by any Officer of the Council.
- 5.3 The Panel will seek to ensure that consideration of agenda items minimises additional burdens on staff resources. Wherever possible, requests are made for the presentation of documents already in existence rather than the production of new documents specifically for the Panel. Suggestions from outside sources, as detailed in paragraph 5.2 will only be placed on the work programme if agreed by the Chair or at a meeting of the Panel.
- 5.4 Attendance from external bodies and members of the public is actively encouraged.
- 5.5 This is a non-decision-making advisory body and therefore this or any notes/reports to the Panel do not include a recommendation on a key Executive decision and have not been referred to in the Forward Plan. However, recommendations for action from the Panel for consideration by Cabinet may do so. This will therefore need to be borne in mind for any recommendations of the Panel.

## **6 NEXT STEPS**

- 6.1 Other topics for consideration and inclusion in the Panel's work programme can be suggested at each meeting, and also by emailing EnvironmentPanel@north-herts.gov.uk

## **7 APPENDICES**

- 7.1 Appendix A – Work Programme and Action Tracker 2025/26

## 8 CONTACT OFFICERS

- 8.1 Georgina Chapman, Policy & Strategy Team Leader, 01462 474121  
[Georgina.Chapman@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Georgina.Chapman@north-herts.gov.uk)
- 8.2 Reuben Ayavoo, Policy & Community Manager, 01462 474212  
[Reuben.Ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Reuben.Ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk)
- 8.3 Ellie Hollingsworth, Policy & Strategy Officer, 01462 474220  
[Ellie.Hollingsworth@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Ellie.Hollingsworth@north-herts.gov.uk)
- 8.4 Daisy Harris, Policy & Strategy Apprentice  
[Daisy.Harris@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Daisy.Harris@north-herts.gov.uk)
- 8.5 Amber Smith-Howell, Policy & Strategy Graduate  
[Amber.Smith-Howell@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Amber.Smith-Howell@north-herts.gov.uk)

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**APPENDIX A – WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER 2025/26**

**PROGRAMME FOR CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT MEETINGS 2025-26**

<b>Meeting 1.</b> <b>17<sup>th</sup> September 2025</b>	Letchworth Heritage Foundation's Design Principles and sustainability
<b>Meeting 2.</b> <b>14<sup>th</sup> January 2026</b>	Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation – Environmental Update  Green Heat Co-op – Community Energy Presentation
<b>Meeting 3.</b> <b>11<sup>th</sup> February 2026</b>	Local Schools Icknield Infant & Nursery School and Hitchin Boys School – Presentation on green initiatives, student involvement in sustainability and on-site biodiversity.  Buntingford First School – the construction and story of the first carbon neutral school in the country.
<b>Meeting 4.</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> April 2026</b>	An update on the progress of the new waste service provision, with presentations from the Council and Veolia, our waste contractor. There will also be presentations from Timberpak Pearce about their mixed recycling facilities, and from Biogen, our food waste recycling service provider

**CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT – ACTION TRACKER**

Action Number	Action	Objective	Team/Individual Responsible	Timeframe	Measurable	Status
1	Contact iChoosr to query inverter type and use of stored power during a power cut.	To resolve a query around inability to use stored power from system during a power outage.	Policy & Strategy Team Leader	To be completed by 22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2025	Response from iChoosr	Complete (see Information Note for 22/01/25 meeting for response. <a href="#">Webpage</a> also updated with info).
2	Review the asks of Decarbonise Letchworth regarding retrofitting and Supplementary Planning Guidance; ascertain whether NHC can help progress action; ascertain NHC plans for SPDs and design guidance and communicate these to the group.	To help Decarbonise Letchworth progress retrofit in Letchworth Garden City.	Policy & Strategy Team Leader	To be completed by 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2025.	Communication to Decarbonise Letchworth.	Complete – Letchworth Heritage Foundation presented at the September Letchworth Forum meeting on this matter.

Action Number	Action	Objective	Team/Individual Responsible	Timeframe	Measurable	Status

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